

## **PERFINS – GENEALOGY** **PART 1 - PERFORATORS**

### **John Mathews**

When John Nelson suggested that more information on Francis Hancock and Frank Braham (Bulletin 341, April 2006, pages 4 & 5) might be in order, he possibly did not realize what a potential “opening of Pandora’s Box” this might have triggered. To many of us, however, it is fascinating (and even amazing) how much information can be gleaned from public records, which are becoming available and so easily accessible.

In taking up John’s suggestion, I discovered that only a few days before, the 1841 Census of England and Wales (indexed) had been added to the *Ancestry.com* web site, which is freely available locally at the National Library of Australia in Canberra. For me, this was a real bonus as it has enabled me to find out more about my immigrant ancestors who came from England, especially those who came out between 1841 and 1851. The 1851 and 1861 Censuses are also newly available since my previous articles. But, back to the perfin makers “family” ...

I have separated the results of my searching into the following groups. In Part 1 – Joseph Sloper and family and perforators of postage stamps (including the sub-postmasters). In Part 2 manufacturers of perforating devices; and Sloper employees.

### **Joseph Sloper and his family**

The 1841 Census was conducted in mid-June of that year, when the first-born child of Joseph and Sarah (nee Leete) Sloper – Joseph (Lavell Leete) Sloper – was, according to the Census, just four months old. Joseph and Sarah were both recorded as being 25 years old and living at Barton Place, Marylebone. Joseph’s occupation was recorded as “painter”. Sarah was shown as having been born in Middlesex, but Joseph as not having been born in that county.

At the 1851 Census, Joseph Sloper, 38y, house decorator, born in Bath, and his wife Sarah, and children Joseph L., Fanny J., Horace, Ellen and Alice, and a house servant, were all living at 215 Oxford Street, Marylebone.

At the 1861 Census, Joseph Sloper and his family were listed as:

At 215 Oxford Street.

Joseph SLOPER, married, 48y, Decorator & builder, b. Bath, Somerset(!)

Joseph L. L. SLOPER, unm, 21 y, assistant, born Hampstead, Middx

Fanny J. SLOPER, unmarried, 18y, (no occupation), born Hampstead, Middlesex.

At Crossbrook St, Cheshunt, Herts.

Sarah Lavell SLOPER, married, 45 y, House decorator wife, b. Stoke Newington, Middlesex

Ellen SLOPER, unmarried, 14 y, scholar, born Oxford St.

Alice SLOPER, unmarried, 12 y, scholar, born Oxford St.

Kate SLOPER, unmarried, 6 y, scholar, born Oxford St.

Eustace SLOPER, unmarried, 1 y, born Oxford St.

At Crossbrook St, Cheshunt, Herts.

Joseph CHAPLIN, married, 49 y, Schoolmaster,

Horace SLOPER, unmarried, 16 y, scholar (boarder), b. Marylebone.

Frank SLOPER, unmarried, 8 y, scholar (boarder), b. Oxford St.

Percy SLOPER, unmarried, 4 y, scholar (visitor), b. Oxford St.

The "school" was 2 doors up from Sarah's residence.

Considering how the family was split up in different locations at various Censuses, it is amazing they had so many children..!!

**Perforators of postage stamps (including sub-postmasters)**

To ensure the correct person was being "tracked" through time, the searching started with their known period of perforating activity, when an identification of occupation could be made. Extension to earlier and later periods could then use age, siblings, parents, etc., to include their pre-perfin years, and also their "retirement".

**Francis Albert Hancock (see Bulletin 297, page 23)**

The 1881 Census lists Francis Hancock as being a 52-year-old postmaster who was born at Hoxton (close to the City). He was then

living at 16 City Road together with his wife Sarah, 3 sons and a daughter, his mother-in-law, a cook and a domestic servant. The International Genealogical Index (IGI) records that he was christened on 17 January 1830 at St. Sepulchre's Church, London, the son of George and Eliza Jane Hancock.

The 1841 Census shows Francis Hancock as an 11-year-old living with his family at Allotment number 55 in the parish of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury. By 1851, the family had moved to 19 Canonbury Villas, Islington. Francis was now 21, and his parents both 48 years old, his father being a printer employing 16 people.

Ten years later, Francis Albert Hancock was now married, and a printer and stationer. He was living with wife Sarah and 3-month-old son George at 37 Wood Street, EC – an address he would also occupy more than 25 years later in his business as a postage stamp dealer, printer, engraver, supplier of perforated stamps, etc. By 1871, he and his family had moved to 3 Bloomsbury Place, Bloomsbury, which was shared by his brother-in-law Charles Sleigh and Charles' wife Theresa.

By the end of the 1880s, Francis Albert Hancock was no longer listed as a postage stamp dealer, but the printing business continued at 37 Wood Street under the name Hancock Brothers.

In 1891, Francis Albert Hancock (now 61 years of age) was living at 186 Green Lanes, Stoke Newington, with his wife, daughter Grace and 22-year-old son Frank who had followed his father's trade as a printer. By 1901, Francis Albert Hancock had retired and was living at 12 City Almshouses, Lambeth, with Sarah and Grace. He died after 1910.

### **Frank Braham (see Bulletin 280, page18)**

Frank Braham was listed in Trade Directories from 1882 as a perforating machine manufacturer, and from 1886 until after 1899 as a perforator of postage stamps.

I had trouble finding Frank in the 1881 Census on the Mormon Church web site, but found him on the UK National Archives in the 1901 Census – a 42-year-old mechanical engineer, still unmarried and living at home at 36 Douglas Road, Islington, with his parents Lewis

and Caroline, and 3 siblings of whom Alfred (32 y) was a clerk in the Post Office, and Edith (36y) was a Postal Telegraph clerk. With knowledge of all these names and ages, I then found the family on the 1881 Census. The transcriber had recorded Lewis' (and thus the family's) surname as "Lewis" also! The family was at 52 Alexander Road, London. Frank's father was born in Bristol and his mother in Doncaster, Yorkshire, but the children had all been born in London. Frank (22y) and his brother Herbert (18y) both had the occupation of Perforating Press Maker, employing 2 other men.

Official records show that Frank was born in the first quarter of 1859. At the 1861 Census, he was 2 years old, living at 25 Clarence Terrace, London. His father was a wholesale optician. Ten years later, Frank was a scholar and the family lived at 142 Southampton Row, London. In 1891, Frank was recorded as a 32-year-old machinist – perhaps he thought the term "perforator of postage stamps" would be too much for the enumerator? At this time, his older sister Flora and younger brothers Herbert and Albert were all clerks in the General Post Office. The family was living at 45 Mildmay Street, London.

### **Sidney Allchin (see Bulletin 293, page 22 & 326, page 28)**

Such a distinctive name makes searching through genealogical records easy. In trade directories, he is listed as a perforator of postage stamps from 1881 until after 1899.

At the 1881 Census, Sidney, his wife Margaret, and 10-month-old daughter Ethel were living at 7 England Lane, Hampstead. One might wonder if he bought perforating dies from Sloper's Tower Royal Works in nearby Blackburn Road. His parents were living at 1 England Lane.

Sidney Allchin was born in the second quarter of 1853 to Alfred and Jane Allchin. His father was a pharmaceutical chemist. Sidney was 8 years old, and the family was living at 32 Coles Terrace, Islington, at the 1861 Census. Ten years later, Sidney had left school and was working as a clerk to a ship broker, while the family was at 180 Barnsbury Road, Islington.

By 1891, Sidney and his wife Margaret had 3 young children and were living at 109 Haverstock Hill, Hampstead. Sidney, now 37

years old, was a “vendor of postage and other Government stamps”. Tragedy struck this young family when Margaret died in the second quarter of 1893. Sidney re-married to Minnie Milton in the last quarter of 1895 and they had a son Sidney Milton Allchin in the third quarter of 1898. At the 1901 Census, Sidney Allchin was described as a chemist and postmaster. The family was at 55 England Lane, Hampstead.

### **James Rose Parsley**

James Rose Pars(e)ley was listed in the trades section of the London Directories as a perforator of postage stamps from 1885 to 1888, at 163 Peckham Park Road, London SE.

He was christened on 21 June 1846, at Caston, Norfolk, the son of William and Mary (nee Rose) Parsley. At the 1881 Census, he and his wife Eliza and their 6 children were living at 136 Peckham Park Road, Camberwell, SE. James’ occupation was recorded as Commercial Clerk. James, Eliza and 3 of their children were still living at Camberwell in 1901 when James was described as being an “Accountant General”.

### **George F. Males (see Bulletin 337, pages 10-11)**

At the 1901 Census, George F. Males was recorded as a 50-year-old grocer and sub-postmaster at 20 Broadway, Deptford. He and his wife Emma had 3 sons and 4 daughters living at home, of whom the eldest daughter Annie (25y) and eldest son Ernest (23y) were both Post & Telegraph Clerks. George had indeed come a long way, in all senses, since his birth in the third quarter of 1850 in Hertfordshire.

In 1851, at the age of 6 months, he lived with his parents William and Rebecca in rural Hertfordshire where his father was an agricultural labourer. Ten years later, young George was described as a “farm boy”, probably working hard to help his father. By 1871, his father had become a shepherd, and George now had 6 brothers and a sister.

George married Emma Brown in the second quarter of 1874 at Hackney, and by the time of the 1881 Census, he was a managing

grocer at Deptford. He became a sub-postmaster some time in the 1880s. In 1891, his 15-year-old daughter Annie had already gained employment as a Telegraph Clerk.

### **Eden Fisher (& Co. Ltd) (see Bulletin 340, page 10)**

Eden Fisher was one of Sloper's early rivals in the stamp perforating business. The firm was known as "Eden Fisher", printer & stationer, from its founding in 1834 at 33 Cannon Street, EC, until the late 1870s when it became "Eden Fisher & Co. Ltd. It moved to 50 Lombard Street, EC, about 1860, and a second office was opened at 95-97 Fenchurch Street, EC, in the late 1870s. It still operated in recent times, and may even still be in business.

Eden Fisher was born on August 3 1811 in Limehouse, East London, son of Thomas and Mary Fisher of Stepney. He married Mary Muller at Newington, South London, in the last quarter of 1837. At the 1851 Census he was 39 years old. He and his wife Mary lived alone with one servant at Church Street, Stoke Newington, North London. His occupation was recorded as "stationer". They appear not to have had children. In 1871, they were living at 3 Clapton Road, Hackney, together with his wife's 27-year-old niece, Sarah Muller. Sarah's parents, Joseph and Louisa, had died in 1870 and 1866 respectively. Sarah's brother, Christian J. Muller, also a stationer, worked for Eden Fisher's company, as noted in the death notice of another sister, Mary Eden Muller, in "The Times" of March 16, 1896.

In May 1884, one of Eden Fisher's travellers, William George Foster, was convicted of embezzling £20 from the company.

At the 1891 Census, Eden and Mary Fisher were living at 3 Maitland Place, Hackney, and Sarah Muller was still living with them. Shortly after that, on December 24, 1891, Mary Fisher died. On March 22, 1892, a fire caused considerable damage to the firm's premises in Fenchurch Street. Eden Fisher died in the second quarter of the same year.

In recent times, the firm of Eden Fisher & Co. Ltd. have been book publishers, particularly of Military History, as shown by many hits by a search on the Google web site.